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| **Author** | **Title** | **Description** |
| Adams, Richard | Watership Down | Set in England’s Downs, a once idyllic rural landscape, this stirring tale of adventure, courage, and survival follows a band of very special rabbits on their flight from the intrusion of man and the certain destruction of their home. Led by a stouthearted pair of brothers, they journey forth from their native Sandleford Warren through the harrowing trials posed by predators and adversaries, to a mysterious promised land and a more perfect society. |
| Albom, Mitch | The Five People You Meet in Heaven | Eddie is a wounded war veteran, an old man who has lived, in his mind, an uninspired life. His job is fixing rides at a seaside amusement park. On his 83rd birthday, a tragic accident kills him, as he tries to save a little girl from a falling cart. He awakes in the afterlife, where he learns that heaven is not a destination. It's a place where your life is explained to you by five people, some of whom you knew, others who may have been strangers. One by one, from childhood to soldier to old age, Eddie's five people revisit their connections to him on earth, illuminating the mysteries of his "meaningless" life, and revealing the haunting secret behind the eternal question: "Why was I here" |
| Anderson , Laura Halse | Speak | "Speak up for yourself--we want to know what you have to say." From the first moment of her freshman year at Merryweather High, Melinda knows this is a big fat lie, part of the nonsense of high school. She is friendless, outcast, because she busted an end-of-summer party by calling the cops, so now nobody will talk to her, let alone listen to her. As time passes, she becomes increasingly isolated and practically stops talking altogether. Only her art class offers any solace, and it is through her work on an art project that she is finally able to face what really happened at that terrible party: she was raped by an upperclassman, a guy who still attends Merryweather and is still a threat to her. Her healing process has just begun when she has another violent encounter with him. But this time Melinda fights back, refuses to be silent, and thereby achieves a measure of vindication. In Laurie Halse Anderson's powerful novel, an utterly believable heroine with a bitterly ironic voice delivers a blow to the hypocritical world of high school. She speaks for many a disenfranchised teenager while demonstrating the importance of speaking up for oneself. |
| Asher, Jay | 13 Reasons Why | Clay Jensen returns home from school to find a strange package with his name on it lying on his porch. Inside he discovers several cassette tapes recorded by Hannah Baker - his classmate and crush - who committed suicide two weeks earlier. Hannah's voice tells him that there are thirteen reasons why she decided to end her life. Clay is one of them. If he listens, he'll find out why. Clay spends the night crisscrossing his town with Hannah as his guide. He becomes a firsthand witness to Hannah's pain, and learns the truth about himself-a truth he never wanted to face. |
| Baum, L. Frank | The Wizard of Oz | Follow the adventures of young Dorothy Gale and her dog, Toto, as their Kansas house is swept away by a cyclone and they find themselves in a strange land called Oz. Here she meets the Munchkins and joins the Scarecrow, Tin Woodman, and the Cowardly Lion on an unforgettable journey to the Emerald City, where lives the all-powered Wizard of Oz. |
| Camus, Albert | The Stranger | Through the story of an ordinary man unwittingly drawn into a senseless murder on an Algerian beach, Camus explored what he termed "the nakedness of man faced with the absurd." |
| Card, Orson Scott | Ender’s Game | In order to develop a secure defense against a hostile alien race's next attack, government agencies breed child geniuses and train them as soldiers. A brilliant young boy, Andrew "Ender" Wiggin lives with his kind but distant parents, his sadistic brother Peter, and the person he loves more than anyone else, his sister Valentine. Peter and Valentine were candidates for the soldier-training program but didn't make the cut--young Ender is the Wiggin drafted to the orbiting Battle School for rigorous military training.  Ender's skills make him a leader in school and respected in the Battle Room, where children play at mock battles in zero gravity. Yet growing up in an artificial community of young soldiers, Ender suffers greatly from isolation, rivalry from his peers, pressure from the adult teachers, and an unsettling fear of the alien invaders. His psychological battles include loneliness, fear that he is becoming like the cruel brother he remembers, and fanning the flames of devotion to his beloved sister.   Is Ender the general Earth needs? But Ender is not the only result of the genetic experiments. The war with the Buggers has been raging for a hundred years, and the quest for the perfect general has been underway for almost as long. Ender's two older siblings are every bit as unusual as he is, but in very different ways. Between the three of them lie the abilities to remake a world. If the world survives, that is. |
|  | Ender’s Shadow |  |
|  | Shadow of the Giant |  |
|  | Shadow of the Hegemon |  |
|  | Shadow Puppets |  |
|  | Speaker for the Dead |  |
| Chopin, Kate | The Awakening | A woman valued as a possession rather than a person, Edna realizes that her life has been ordered by the men in her life. Wife, mother of two and discontented with her role in society, she begins to turn away from associates her husband believes that she should cultivate to promote his business interests. She relishes the presence of those individuals who treat her as an interesting person and seeks out those who are interesting to her. She begins to paint not because she is so talented but because it allows her to do something that she herself can do to express her inner self.  While Edna adores her children and would give her life for them, she is increasingly drawn to a search for who she herself might become. Her husband is kind and gentle and loves his wife as a man should, he is restrained by the values of the day. Edna did not marry for love but finds it in her search for who she is. This creates another dilemma for her as she realizes that love can lead to fulfillment in another way. |
| Christie, Agatha | And Then There Were None | the story of 10 strangers, each lured to Indian Island by a mysterious host. Once his guests have arrived, the host accuses each person of murder. Unable to leave the island, the guests begin to share their darkest secrets--until they begin to die. |
|  | The Mirror Crak’d From Side to Side | In The Mirror Crack’d from Side to Side, a fatal dose of poison meant for a glamorous movie star fells her ardent admirer instead—and Miss Marple is there to unmask a murderer. |
|  | Why Didn’t They Ask Evans? | a dying man’s bewildering last words pull an inquisitive young man and his beautiful companion into a dangerous web of lethal secrets. |
| Clare, Cassandra | City of Bones | When fifteen-year-old Clary Fray heads out to the Pandemonium Club in New York City, she hardly expects to witness a murder—much less a murder committed by three teenagers covered with strange tattoos and brandishing bizarre weapons. Then the body disappears into thin air. It’s hard to call the police when the murderers are invisible to everyone else and when there is nothing—not even a smear of blood—to show that a boy has died. Or was he a boy?  This is Clary’s first meeting with the Shadowhunters, warriors dedicated to ridding the earth of demons. It’s also her first encounter with Jace, a Shadowhunter who looks a little like an angel and acts a lot like a jerk. Within twenty-four hours Clary is pulled into Jace’s world with a vengeance, when her mother disappears and Clary herself is attacked by a demon. But why would demons be interested in ordinary mundanes like Clary and her mother? And how did Clary suddenly get the Sight? The Shadowhunters would like to know. . . .  Exotic and gritty, exhilarating and utterly gripping, Cassandra Clare’s ferociously entertaining fantasy takes readers on a wild ride that they will never want to end. |
|  | City of Ashes |  |
|  | City of Glass |  |
|  | City of Fallen Angels |  |
|  | City of Lost Souls |  |
| Conrad, Joseph | Heart of Darkness | Dark allegory describes the narrator's journey up the Congo River and his meeting with, and fascination by, Mr. Kurtz, a mysterious personage who dominates the unruly inhabitants of the region. Masterly blend of adventure, character development, psychological penetration. Considered by many Conrad's finest, most enigmatic story. |
| Cooper, James F. | The Last of the Mohicans | James Fenimore Cooper's The Last of the Mohicans is a classic piece of historical fiction, taking place in 1757 during the French and Indian War |
| Cormier, Robert | I am The Cheese | Adam's father is in hospital and Adam has set off to visit him. It's a long, cold journey; as he travels along, Adam gets tired, and to take his mind off his exhaustion, he traces the events that led up to his father being taken to hospital. He had testified against government level corruption and the family became the subject of a government-orchestrated protection plan. The journey is a kind of odyssey, a search - through the mysteries of the mind. Adam must unlock the past and really remember it if he is to survive. |
|  | The Chocolate War | Stunned by his mother's recent death and appalled by the way his father sleepwalks through life, Jerry Renault, a New England high school student, ponders the poster in his locker-*Do I dare disturb the universe?*  Part of his universe is Archie Costello, leader of a secret school societ-the Virgils-and master of intimidation.  Archie himself is intimidated by a cool, ambitious teacher into having the Virgils spearhead the annual fund-raising event-a chocolate sale.  When Jerry refuses to be bullied into selling chocolates, he becomes a hero, but his defiance is a threat to Archie, the Virgils, and the school.  In the inevitable showdown, Archie's skill at intimidation turns Jerry from hero to outcast, to victim, leaving him alone and terribly vulnerable. |
| Crane, Stephen | The Red Badge of Courage | Henry Fleming, a private in the Union Army, runs away from the field of war. Afterwards, the shame he feels at this act of cowardice ignites his desire to receive an injury in combat a red badge of courage that will redeem him. Stephen Crane s novel about a young soldier s experiences during the American Civil War is well known for its understated naturalism and its realistic depiction of battle. |
| Dickens, Charles | David Copperfield | Growing up is never easy--especially if your name happens to be David Copperfield. Orphaned as an infant, David must suffer the privation and cruelties of his evil stepfather, Mr. Murdstone--who packs David away to a workhouse at the age of ten! a trusting but vulnerable boy and practically alone in the world, David finds himself time after time at the mercy of a rogue's gallery of characters: the dashing but deceitful Steerforth, the detestable clerk Uriah Heep, and, last but not least, the beautiful but ditzy Dora. With friends like these it's a miracle that David grows up at all! |
|  | Oliver Twist | Set in Victorian London, this is a tale of a spirited young innocent's unwilling but inevitable recruitment into a scabrous gang of thieves. Masterminded by the loathsome Fagin, the underworld crew features some of Dickens' most memorable characters, including the vicious Bill Sikes, gentle Nancy, and the juvenile pickpocket known as the Artful Dodger. |
| Dillard, Annie | Pilgrim at Tinker Creek | Pilgrim at Tinker Creek is the story of a dramatic year in Virginia's Blue Ridge valley. Annie Dillard sets out to see what she can see. What she sees are astonishing incidents of "mystery, death, beauty, violence." |
| Draper, Sharon | Hazelwood Trilogy (must read all 3)  Darkness Before Dawn, Forged by Fire, Tears of a Tiger |  |
| Edwards, Kim | The Memory Keeper’s Daughter | On a winter night in 1964, Dr. David Henry is forced by a blizzard to deliver his own twins. His son, born first, is perfectly healthy. Yet when his daughter is born, he sees immediately that she has Down's syndrome. Rationalizing it as a need to protect Norah, his wife, he makes a split second decision that will alter all of their lives forever. He asks his nurse to take the baby away to an institution and never to reveal the secret. But Caroline, the nurse, cannot leave the infant. Instead, she disappears into another city to raise the child herself. So begins this beautifully told story that unfolds over a quarter of a century in which these two families, ignorant of each other, are yet bound by David Henry's fateful decision that long-ago winter night. |
| Frank, Anne | The Diary of a Young Girl | *The Diary of a Young Girl* is the record of two years in the life of a remarkable Jewish girl whose triumphant humanity in the face of unfathomable deprivation and fear has made the book one of the most enduring documents of our time. |
| Golding, William | Lord of the Flies | William Golding's classic tale about a group of English schoolboys who are plane-wrecked on a deserted island is just as chilling and relevant today as when it was first published in 1954. At first, the stranded boys cooperate, attempting to gather food, make shelters, and maintain signal fires. Overseeing their efforts are Ralph, "the boy with fair hair," and Piggy, Ralph's chubby, wisdom-dispensing sidekick whose thick spectacles come in handy for lighting fires. Although Ralph tries to impose order and delegate responsibility, there are many in their number who would rather swim, play, or hunt the island's wild pig population. Soon Ralph's rules are being ignored or challenged outright. His fiercest antagonist is Jack, the redheaded leader of the pig hunters, who manages to lure away many of the boys to join his band of painted savages. The situation deteriorates as the trappings of civilization continue to fall away, until Ralph discovers that instead of being hunters, he and Piggy have become the hunted: "He forgot his words, his hunger and thirst, and became fear; hopeless fear on flying feet." Golding's gripping novel explores the boundary between human reason and animal instinct, all on the brutal playing field of adolescent competition. |
| Keyes, Daniel | Flowers for Algernon | the beloved, classic story of a mentally disabled man whose experimental quest for intelligence mirrors that of Algernon, an extraordinary lab mouse. In poignant diary entries, Charlie tells how a brain operation increases his IQ and changes his life. As the experimental procedure takes effect, Charlie's intelligence expands until it surpasses that of the doctors who engineered his metamorphosis. The experiment seems to be a scientific breakthrough of paramount importance--until Algernon begins his sudden, unexpected deterioration. Will the same happen to Charlie? |
| Kidd, Sue Monk | The Secret Life of Bees | Lily, is an aspiring writer who lives with the guilt of accidentally shooting her mother when she was young. Her father T. Ray shows no sign of love towards his daughter while the only one who pays attention to her is Rosaleen, an African American maid working for the family. Rosaleen has always been a bit rebellious, and when going to register to vote she is assaulted by racist men for pouring snuff juice on their shoes. She is taken to jail while Lily, tired of her life at home decides to sneak her past the police. Both of them head towards Tiburon, on account that Lily has a picture once owned by her mother with the location written on the back. Through a series of events the pair end up living with African American sisters June, May, and August, who are all beekeepers. June is a bit cold towards Lily in the beginning and has a fear of commitment, May has a mental issue starting back from when her twin was killed, and August, a wonderful and understanding woman, is the most welcoming of the Daughters of Mary, a clan dedicated to the statue of what was believed to be the Virgin Mary. During her time there Lily meets a boy named Zachary, who is angry at the world for hating against the color of skin. At one point in the story Zachary is put in jail, and May who is so stricken by the grief of it all commits suicide. |
| Knowles, John | A Separate Peace | *A Separate Peace* is a harrowing and luminous parable of the dark side of adolescence. Gene is a lonely, introverted intellectual. Phineas is a handsome, taunting, daredevil athlete. What happens between the two friends one summer, like the war itself, banishes the innocence of these boys and their world. |
| Krakauer, Jon | Into the Wild | In April 1992 a young man from a well-to-do family hitchhiked to Alaska and walked alone into the wilderness north of Mt. McKinley. His name was Christopher Johnson McCandless. He had given $25,000 in savings to charity, abandoned his car and most of his possessions, burned all the cash in his wallet, and invented a new life for himself. Four months later, his decomposed body was found by a moose hunter.... |
| L’Engle, Madeleine | A Wrinkle In Time | When the children learn that Mr. Murry has been captured by the Dark Thing, they time travel to Camazotz, where they must face the leader IT in the ultimate battle between good and evil—a journey that threatens their lives and our universe. |
| Malcolm X and Alex Haley | Autobiography of Malcolm X | From hustling, drug addiction and armed violence in America's black ghettos Malcolm X turned, in a dramatic prison conversion, to the puritanical fervour of the Black Muslims. As their spokesman he became identified in the white press as a terrifying teacher of race hatred; but to his direct audience, the oppressed American blacks, he brought hope and self-respect. This autobiography (written with Alex Haley) reveals his quick-witted integrity, usually obscured by batteries of frenzied headlines, and the fierce idealism which led him to reject both liberal hypocrisies and black racialism. |
| Martell, Yann | Life of Pi | The son of a zookeeper, Pi Patel has an encyclopedic knowledge of animal behavior and a fervent love of stories. When Pi is sixteen, his family emigrates from India to North America aboard a Japanese cargo ship, along with their zoo animals bound for new homes.  The ship sinks. Pi finds himself alone in a lifeboat, his only companions a hyena, an orangutan, a wounded zebra, and Richard Parker, a 450-pound Bengal tiger. Soon the tiger has dispatched all but Pi, whose fear, knowledge, and cunning allow him to coexist with Richard Parker for 227 days while lost at sea. When they finally reach the coast of Mexico, Richard Parker flees to the jungle, never to be seen again. The Japanese authorities who interrogate Pi refuse to believe his story and press him to tell them "the truth." After hours of coercion, Pi tells a second story, a story much less fantastical, much more conventional--but is it more true? |
| McCarthy, Cormac | The Road | "The Road" is a work of stunning, savage, heartbreaking beauty. Set in the post-apocalyptic hell of an unending nuclear winter, Cormac McCarthy writes about a nameless man and his young son, wandering through a world gone crazy; bleak, cold, dark, where the snow falls down gray; moving south toward the coast, looking somewhere, anywhere, for life and warmth. Nothing grows in this blasted world; people turn into cannibals to survive. We don't know if we're looking at the aftermath of a nuclear war, or maybe an extinction level event -- an asteroid or a comet; McCarthy deliberately doesn't tell us, and we come to realize it doesn't matter anyway. Whether man or nature threw a wild pitch, the world is just as dead. |
| Melville, Herman | Moby Dick | The story tells the adventures of wandering sailor Ishmael, and his voyage on the whaleship Pequod, commanded by Captain Ahab. Ishmael soon learns that Ahab has one purpose on this voyage: to seek out a specific whale—Moby Dick, a ferocious, enigmatic white sperm whale. In a previous encounter, the whale destroyed Ahab's boat and bit off his leg, which now drives Ahab to take revenge. |
| Morrison, Toni | The Bluest Eye | Pecola Breedlove, a young black girl, prays every day for beauty. Mocked by other children for the dark skin, curly hair, and brown eyes that set her apart, she yearns for normalcy, for the blond hair and blue eyes that she believes will allow her to finally fit in.Yet as her dream grows more fervent, her life slowly starts to disintegrate in the face of adversity and strife. A powerful examination of our obsession with beauty and conformity, Toni Morrison’s virtuosic first novel asks powerful questions about race, class, and gender with the subtlety and grace that have always characterized her writing. |
| Paton, Alan | Cry, the Beloved Country | *Cry, the Beloved Country* is the deeply moving story of the Zulu pastor Stephen Kumalo and his son, Absalom, set against the background of a land and a people riven by racial injustice. Remarkable for its lyricism, unforgettable for character and incident, *Cry, the Beloved Country* is a classic work of love and hope, courage and endurance, born of the dignity of man. |
| Pelzer, Dave | A Child Called It | This book chronicles the unforgettable account of one of the most severe child abuse cases in California history. It is the story of Dave Pelzer, who was brutally beaten and starved by his emotionally unstable, alcoholic mother: a mother who played tortuous, unpredictable games--games that left him nearly dead. He had to learn how to play his mother's games in order to survive because she no longer considered him a son, but a slave; and no longer a boy, but an "it."  Dave's bed was an old army cot in the basement, and his clothes were torn and raunchy. When his mother allowed him the luxury of food, it was nothing more than spoiled scraps that even the dogs refused to eat. The outside world knew nothing of his living nightmare. He had nothing or no one to turn to, but his dreams kept him alive--dreams of someone taking care of him, loving him and calling him their son. |
| Rand, Ayn | The Fountainhead | On the surface, it is a story of one man, Howard Roark, and his struggles as an architect in the face of a successful rival, Peter Keating, and a newspaper columnist, Ellsworth Toohey. But the book addresses a number of universal themes: the strength of the individual, the tug between good and evil, the threat of fascism. The confrontation of those themes, along with the amazing stroke of Rand's writing, combine to give this book its enduring influence. |
| Remarque, Erich Maria | All Quiet on the Western Front | *I am young, I am twenty years old; yet I know nothing of life but despair, death, fear, and fatuous superficiality cast over an abyss of sorrow. . . .*  This is the testament of Paul Bäumer, who enlists with his classmates in the German army during World War I. They become soldiers with youthful enthusiasm. But the world of duty, culture, and progress they had been taught breaks in pieces under the first bombardment in the trenches.  Through years of vivid horror, Paul holds fast to a single vow: to fight against the principle of hate that meaninglessly pits young men of the same generation but different uniforms against one another . . .  if only he can come out of the war alive. |
| Smith, Betty | A Tree Grows in Brooklyn | A poignant tale of childhood and the ties of family, "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn" will transport the reader to the early 1900s where a little girl named Francie dreamily looks out her window at a tree struggling to reach the sky. |
| Steinback, John | The Grapes of Wrath | A portrait of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless, of one man’s fierce reaction to injustice, and of one woman’s stoical strength, the novel captures the horrors of the Great Depression and probes into the very nature of equality and justice in America. Although it follows the movement of thousands of men and women and the transformation of an entire nation, **The Grapes of Wrath** is also the story of one Oklahoma family, the Joads, who are driven off their homestead and forced to travel west to the promised land of California. Out of their trials and their repeated collisions against the hard realities of an America divided into Haves and Have-Nots evolves a drama that is intensely human yet majestic in its scale and moral vision, elemental yet plainspoken, tragic but ultimately stirring in its human dignity. |
|  | The Pearl | the story of the great pearl, how it was found, and how it was lost. For the diver Kino, finding a magnificent pearl means the promise of a better life for his impoverished family. His dream blinds him to the greed and suspicions the pearl arouses in him and his neighbors, and even his loving wife cannot temper his obsession or stem the events leading to the tragedy. |
|  | The Winter of Our Discontent | Ethan Allen Hawley, the novel's protagonist, works as a clerk in a grocery store that his prominent family once owned. Without status in the town, his wife is restless, and his teenage children are hungry for the tantalizing material comforts he cannot provide. Then one day, in a moment of moral crisis, Ethan decides to take a holiday from his own scrupulous standards. In *The Winter of Our Discontent,*John Steinbeck, perhaps the master writer of the American working class, explores the cultural malaise of the 1960s and its far-ranging implications: social, familial, and personal. |
| Stevenson, Robert Louis | Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde | This intriguing combination of fantasy thriller and moral allegory depicts the gripping struggle of two opposing personalities — one essentially good, the other evil — for the soul of one man. Its tingling suspense and intelligent and sensitive portrayal of man's dual nature reveal Stevenson as a novelist of great skill and originality. |
| Stockett, Kathryn | The Help | The Help is about a young white woman in the early 1960s in Mississippi who becomes interested in the plight of the black ladies' maids that every family has working for them. She writes their stories about mistreatment, abuse and heartbreaks of working in white families' homes, all just before the Civil Rights revolution. |
| Stowe, Harriet Beecher | Uncle Tom’s Cabin | In a time when women might see the majority of their children die, Harriet Beecher Stowe portrays beautiful Eliza fleeing slavery to protect her son. In a time when many whites claimed slavery had "good effects" on blacks, **Uncle Tom's Cabin** paints pictures of three plantations, each worse than the other, where even the best plantation leaves a slave at the mercy of fate or debt. |
| Tolkein, JRR | The Hobbit | Bilbo Baggins is a hobbit who enjoys a comfortable, unambitious life, rarely traveling any farther than his pantry or cellar. But his contentment is disturbed when the wizard Gandalf and a company of dwarves arrive on his doorstep one day to whisk him away on an adventure. They have launched a plot to raid the treasure hoard guarded by Smaug the Magnificent, a large and very dangerous dragon. Bilbo reluctantly joins their quest, unaware that on his journey to the Lonely Mountain he will encounter both a magic ring and a frightening creature known as Gollum. |
| Twain, Mark | The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn | Climb aboard the raft with Huck and Jim and drift away from the "sivilized" life and into a world of adventure, excitement, danger, and self-discovery. Huck's shrewd and humorous narrative is complemented by lyrical descriptions of the Mississippi valley and a sparkling cast of memorable characters. |
|  | The Adventures of Tom Sawyer | This childhood classic relates a small-town boy's pranks and escapades with timeless humor and wisdom. In addition to his everyday stunts (searching for buried treasure, trying to impress the adored Becky Thatcher), Tom experiences a dramatic turn of events when he witnesses a murder, runs away, and returns to attend his own funeral and testify in court. |
|  | Life on the Mississippi | The book begins with a brief history of the river from its discovery by Hernando de Soto in 1541. Chapters 4-22 describe Twain's career as a Mississippi steamboat pilot, the fulfillment of a childhood dream. The second half of Life on the Mississippi tells of Twain's return, many years after, to travel the river from St. Louis to New Orleans. By then the competition from railroads had made steamboats passe, in spite of improvements in navigation and boat construction. Twain sees new, large cities on the river, and records his observations on greed, gullibility, tragedy, and bad architecture |
| Verne, Jules | Around the World in 80 Days | The eccentric English gentleman Phileas Fogg accepts a challenge to circle the globe in no more than 80 days — an incredible feat for the Victorian age. Exotic locales, seemingly insurmountable obstacles, and comic relief (chiefly supplied by Fogg's loyal valet, Passepartout) provide a fantastic blend of adventure, entertainment, and suspense. |
|  | A Journey to the Center of the Earth | An adventurous geology professor mounts an expedition that descends into a subterranean world of luminous rocks, antediluvian forests, and fantastic marine life — a living past that holds the secrets to the origins of human existence. Jules Verne's 19th-century action classic has the added appeal of a psychological quest, in which the journey is as significant as the destination. |
|  | Twenty Thousand-Leagues Under the Sea | A Prophetic 1870 adventure novel, featuring a bizarre underwater craft commanded by the mysterious Captain Nemo, predated the submarine. |
| Walls, Jeanette | The Glass Castle | Jeannette Walls grew up with parents whose ideals and stubborn nonconformity were both their curse and their salvation. Rex and Rose Mary Walls had four children. In the beginning, they lived like nomads, moving among Southwest desert towns, camping in the mountains. Rex was a charismatic, brilliant man who, when sober, captured his children's imagination, teaching them physics, geology, and above all, how to embrace life fearlessly. Rose Mary, who painted and wrote and couldn't stand the responsibility of providing for her family, called herself an "excitement addict." Cooking a meal that would be consumed in fifteen minutes had no appeal when she could make a painting that might last forever.  Later, when the money ran out, or the romance of the wandering life faded, the Walls retreated to the dismal West Virginia mining town -- and the family -- Rex Walls had done everything he could to escape. He drank. He stole the grocery money and disappeared for days. As the dysfunction of the family escalated, Jeannette and her brother and sisters had to fend for themselves, supporting one another as they weathered their parents' betrayals and, finally, found the resources and will to leave home. |